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Talking Points: Meeting with SecDef and SecState on 15 October
Lebanon Withdrawals

1. The State Department formulation for staged withdrawals from Lebanon, described in my memorandum of yesterday, is being challenged by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who are offering the following alternative. According to General Andy Cooley, JCS Chief of Planning, Secretary Weinberger supports this plan.

- The withdrawals seen by State during Stage 1 are insufficient. In the JCS conception, not only should the Israelis withdraw to the 43 kilometer line, but the Syrians should withdraw to the northern portion of the Biqa Valley. The 5 kilometers envisaged for the Syrians is simply not sufficient.
- The "single line" deployment of a 10,500 man MNF or UNIFIL along the Beirut-Damascus road is both too large and incorrect militarily. JCS is proposing a one brigade force of around 5000 which would occupy key terrain features -- which any aggressor out to break the disengagement would be required to take. Sensors, etc., would also be utilized, but no patrolling. The JCS is undertaking this key terrain analysis now. The 5000 man force may require augmentation by logistics elements and any standby fire support (such as US carrier neaby) required. JCS would far prefer a UNIFIL-supervised withdrawal process and force, but would concur in an MNF including US participation under these circumstances.
- As far as "Stage Two" is concerned -- described in the State paper as a 10-15,000 man force along or in the area south of 43 kilometers to the Israeli border -- the JCS does not wish to even consider this issue at this time. In their opinion, if disengagement is achieved in Phase I, then the problem of the south will better be left to diplomacy or a Lebanese-Israeli agreement. In any case, it cannot be considered in the present unclear situation.
- Finally, the JCS agrees with our assessment that conditions in north Lebanon are simply unpredictable at this time -- and the prospects are for a future Palestinian presence there. In their opinion, this matter should be left for time and a strengthened central Lebanese army to resolve.

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JCS review completed.

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returned, will informally brief them on the status of the mission as of three days ago. Essentially, the Lebanese do not seem sufficiently prepared to deal properly as yet.

3. Other than my suggestions to you regarding the necessity of considering the probability of long-term turmoil in north Lebanon, I do not believe we are required to take a position on the above issues. The JCS proposals sound reasonable to me, although DOD does have an ingrained motivation to keep the US troop commitment to the absolute minimum. Their internal assessment also indicates that any force that deploys outside Beirut will begin to take casualties, which they naturally take into account.

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